

The Last Message of the Old Testament

Four hundred years is how long God would be silent after His last message to Israel through the prophet Malachi. After Malachi's preaching, there would cease to be prophets among Israel until the opening of the New Testament. This is something that the people of Israel acknowledge in their writings between the testaments (the Apocrypha). To properly appreciate the book of Malachi, it is important to understand where the nation was in its history at this point in time.

The Babylonian captivity is over. The temple has been rebuilt, the priesthood restored, and the people are offering sacrifices again. God has blessed the nation to accomplish some wonderful things. And yet, sadly, it seemed that they had forgotten that. They questioned God's love for them (Malachi 1:1-5). The real problem was that they didn't love God!

What did the prophet say to God's people in the last message of the Old Testament?

"Don't give God junk!"

- The nation was guilty of giving God weak and feeble sacrifices on the altar (Malachi 1:6-14). The priests were the leaders in this pathetic effort.
- Instead of giving God their best, these people were guilty of giving the Lord what was equivalent to junk! They were giving God animals that they wouldn't even give their governor!
- God expects reverent and honorable worship from his people (John 4:23-24). He demands that we offer our bodies and living and holy sacrifices (Romans 12:1).

"Marriage matters!"

- Israel was putting away the wives of their youth and marrying women that God did not want them to marry (Malachi 2:13-16). God was a witness to this evil! He wanted them to understand that their divorces were violating the covenant with their spouse and Him.
- Jesus spoke of the significance of the marriage covenant in Matthew 19:6.
- We must always that marriage is first and foremost about God. God must be at the center of our marriages! When He is, our marriages will be strong and lifelong.

"Care for people in need!"

- God's people failed to use their blessings to help others (Malachi 2:17-3:5). God was going to bring judgment on those who failed to help the less fortunate.
- Helping the needy is an important matter to God (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10; Acts 20:35; Matthew 25:41-46). Are we touched when we encounter people who need our help? If not, we are no different than Israel in Malachi's time!
- We need to be careful of being selfish with our blessings and refusing to help the helpless.

"Don't rob God!"

- The nation robbed God of tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-10). They were stingy and withholding from God what rightfully belonged to Him.
- The giving we do in worship is significant (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). It was not only be done cheerfully, but also sacrificially (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).
- We don't also want to be guilty of disrespecting and robbing God in our worship.

Conclusion:

God is great and desires His name to be excellent among the nations (Malachi 1:10-11). Are we seeking to glorify His name?

Shawn Jeffries